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NATO, KISL, AF

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON INSURGENCY OPENS DIALOGUE;
SUPPORTS NATO EFFORTS ON COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

11. (U) This cable is Sensitive But Unclassified -- Not for Internet distribution.

12. (U) SUMMARY: As part of the U.S. Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, the State Department collaborated with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to deliver a European conference on insurgency in Munich, Germany in late March. The event was entitled "A Comprehensive Approach to Modern Conflict: Afghanistan and Beyond." The conference succeeded in its goals of: 1) opening a discussion on a whole-of-government, civilian-led approach to counterinsurgency with NATO partners and other close allies, the European Union and international organizations such as the World Bank; and 2) supporting efforts at NATO to develop the Comprehensive Approach. END SUMMARY.

13. (U) As part of the U.S. Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, which seeks to socialize counterinsurgency concepts across the civilian USG agencies and to improve the USG's ability to help host nations defeat destructive insurgencies, the Office of Plans, Policy and Analysis in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/PPA), the Office of the Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction (S/CRS), and the Office of European Security and Political Affairs in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR/RPM) organized the Comprehensive Approach to Modern Conflict conference jointly with the Stability Operations and NATO Affairs offices in OSD. The event was held under the auspices of the Marshall Center in Munich on March 26-27. The conference was not about Afghanistan specifically, but focused on counterinsurgency and used Afghanistan as a contemporary and compelling case study from which to initiate discussion.

14. (SBU) Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Ambassador Eric Edelman, NATO Assistant Secretary General Martin Erdmann, and former NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Commander General David Richards delivered keynote addresses. The audience of 180 senior policy makers was drawn mainly from ISAF contributing countries, the Afghan government, NATO, the EU, and major international organizations such as the World Bank, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the NGO and academic community. Government participants were mainly from the ministries of foreign affairs and defense, with a small contingent from national development agencies.

THE DISCUSSION ON COUNTERINSURGENCY AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

15. (SBU) Despite European reluctance to use the term

"counterinsurgency", the concept was at the heart of the event. Conversations regarding the substance of the Comprehensive Approach and counterinsurgency were more advanced in Europe than the conference organizers had anticipated. Across European capitals, the term "Comprehensive Approach" -- in NATO, denoting a joint civil-military approach to complex challenges, mainly stabilization and reconstruction -- does not yet have a common, agreed definition. However, it has increasing currency among European governments.

¶16. (SBU) The Comprehensive Approach discussions addressed the importance of closer coordination of NATO's military capacity and civilian assets, the need for a counterinsurgency program or some form of civil-military strategy for non-permissive environments, and coordination between NATO and various international actors, both governmental and non-governmental. One working group pointed out the need to properly resource civilian agencies if a civilian-led, whole-of-government counterinsurgency strategy, including post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization operations, is to be viable. Across a number of presentations there was a strong theme of encouraging Afghans to take control of the governance and reconstruction processes developing in their own country, including the counterinsurgency effort.

CONFERENCE DELIVERABLES

¶17. (U) The conference's focus on Afghanistan added a sense of urgency to discussions at NATO this spring on developing pragmatic proposals for implementing the "Comprehensive Approach" within the Alliance. NATO Defense Ministers will likely approve a raft of initiatives in June aimed at improving civil-military interface in the areas of: (1) planning and operations; (2) training and exercises; (3) cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations and local

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actors; and (4) strategic communications. If approved by Ministers, a follow-on series of recommendations for implementing these pragmatic proposals will be developed later this year.

¶18. (SBU) Conference deliverables included proposed counterinsurgency courses at the NATO School and Under Secretary Edelman's proposal for a counterinsurgency academy in Afghanistan. The latter was established in May of this year. The first class included 45 Afghans and 15 participants from ISAF contributing nations -- Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey -- among its 123 graduates, the remainder being Americans. There were also one Pole and two Romanians on the teaching staff, along with State and USAID officers. The next one-week class will begin in July.

¶19. (U) Finally, virtual discussion groups based on working group topics may be established, and the international linkages for the OSD-State-USAID sponsored Center for Complex Operations will be expanded. (NOTE: The Center for Complex Operations is a work in progress. It will be an interagency body with a whole-of-government focus on strengthening the USG's capability to more effectively conduct irregular warfare, stabilization and reconstruction, and counterinsurgency activities. The center will network training, education, research and lessons learned programs underway across the USG and among international partners.)

POCS AND INFORMATION ON COIN AND THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

¶10. (U) The Department would like to thank the 40-plus posts who assisted in securing attendees and conference speakers and panelists. In particular, the Department would like to thank USNATO and USEU for their work in making the event a success. In paragraph 11, conference attendees are listed with their

titles and contact information to assist posts in identifying points of contact on counterinsurgency and the Comprehensive Approach. On the internet at www.usgcoin.org, additional information can be found on the event - conference reports, suggested reading materials and many of the event's speeches - and on the USG Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative. Conference documents are located on the website under the events tab. Questions and comments on the initiative and the conference can be sent to CooneyTF@state.sgov.gov.

¶11. (SBU) Attendees at the Comprehensive Approach to Modern Conflict: Afghanistan and Beyond conference in Munich, Germany on March 26-27, 2007 are listed below by country in alphabetical order. Please note that speakers and panelists are broken out separately at the top of the list, with their nationalities noted in parentheses.

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¶12. (U) Minimize considered.
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